

Let's eat grandma!



Let's eat, grandma!

**PUNCTUATION  
SAVES LIVES!**

## Why do we care?

Commas are small and handle a lot of a sentence's heavy lifting in order to make it clear and precise. We use commas all the time in writing, so let's dive in and figure out how to get them right!

Information retrieved from:

Driscoll, Dana and Allen Brizee. "Extended Rules for Using Commas." *Purdue Online Writing Lab*, 3 April 2014, <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/607/02/>.

## Writing Desk Hours

**Monday-Thursday**

12-5pm, 7-10pm

**Friday** 12pm-5pm

**Sunday** 1-5pm, 7-10pm

Rolvaag 302 & 354

The answers to these practice examples are located at the Rolvaag Writing Desk!

Have more questions? Still don't understand commas? Make an appointment with a writing tutor!

- 1.) Visit the Writing Desk homepage, or [stolaf.edu/asc/writing-help/](http://stolaf.edu/asc/writing-help/)
- 2.) Click on the Appointments box
- 3.) Sign in with your St. Olaf email, then click an appointment that works with your schedule!

Or just drop on by!

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# Commas

*Brought to you by the Writing Desk*

# Writing desk

[http://wp.stolaf.edu/  
asc/writing-help](http://wp.stolaf.edu/asc/writing-help)



**1.** Commas separate clauses that relate closely to each other. Sometimes this involves two independent clauses joined together with a comma followed by a **conjunction**:

*Example: I used to study in the library, but recently I have been going to Regents instead.*

Careful! If the two clauses you're joining together are **dependent**, then you don't need a comma.

*Example: My roommate promised she'd bring me a Pause cookie and tell me all about the dance.*



**4.** Other times, commas are used **after introductory words** or clauses:

*Example: After I had my first taste of Pause pizza, I knew I could never go back to Domino's.*

Careful! If phrases beginning with because, after, while, etc. are used **after** your main clause, no comma is needed.

*Example: I loved living in Hoyme while I was a first year.*

*"Life is a series of commas, not periods."*

*-Matthew McConaughey*

**2.** If a phrase in your sentence is **nonessential** (the sentence makes sense without it), then offset that phrase with commas:

*Example: I am going to Writing 111, my favorite class, after lunch.*

If a phrase is **essential** (relative clauses or indirect statements), however, you don't need to use a comma:

*Example: She told me there was no way it would snow before Halloween.*

**3.** If you're listing 3 or more elements, use commas to separate each element:

*Example: Would you rather live in Thorson, Mellby, or Larson?*

Here are some sentences that could use a little comma help. See if you can spot where to insert or delete commas.

*While I was walking to Regents the other day I noticed some beautiful fall leaves.*

*The cookies I bought from the Pause, are delicious.*

*Sunday brunch in the caf, which is my favorite meal of the week is always delicious even though the caf can get pretty crowded.*

Now try making your own sentences using these rules!

